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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

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Reserve

FAO COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE

- * CAN MAN WIN HIS FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER?
- * MUST THERE BE FAMINE IN SOME LANDS, WHILE OTHERS BURN THEIR FOOD?
- * WHAT IS AMERICA'S STAKE IN A WELL-FED WORLD?

On September 2 in Copenhagen the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization will convene. Some of these questions may then receive the beginning of an answer when these important matters will come up for study:

- (1) Proposals for a long-term international food program aimed at preventing both shortages and surpluses of food and other farm products.
- (2) A comprehensive world food survey based on information from 70 countries.
- (3) A draft agreement covering relations between FAO and the United Nations.
- (4) The first annual report of the Director-General.
- (5) A development plan for forestry and forest products.

The ultimate goals of the FAO to be discussed at the Copenhagen Conference are of direct concern to food producers and food consumers alike. All Americans have a stake in the goal of an increasingly productive agriculture, balanced by an increasingly productive industry.

For the farmer, there are possibilities of vast potential markets. The two-thirds of the earth's population now underfed represent the greatest untapped markets in the world.

For the businessman, expanding production, expanding markets and expanding trade mean healthier, profitable business.

For the worker, production means jobs, income and better diets.

For the housewife, improved food production and distribution facilities mean better nutrition and a healthier family.

For all people of good will, freeing the world from the fear of want is the foundation on which they hope to build a permanent peace.

As the Copenhagen Conference works to bring nations together to achieve common policies and actions in solving world food problems, it works in the knowledge that the world does not have to tolerate hunger.

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Hunger is no longer a rule of nature. One man on the land can feed 10 or more off the land. In our country 10 million farm operators and workers are feeding a population of 140 million--and in the last marketing year, we sent one-sixth of our food abroad besides.

But while parts of the world have demonstrated man's capacity to produce food in abundance, in most countries the story is different. Before the war, more than half the world was seriously undernourished--with less than 2,250 calories per person per day. (Minimum for normal health, growth and energy is 2,600). On half the earth, people were hungry.

The world has no food to burn if people can afford to buy what they want--and need. This country's wartime experience demonstrated what high-level buying power means in terms of high food consumption, and more prosperous agriculture. Applying the lesson of this experience to the world is one of FAO's major aims.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Successful international cooperation in agriculture must be based on understanding of the problems and programs of FAO. Information is the key to understanding. The first step therefore is to provide the public with information, and the Conference opening in Copenhagen September 2 furnishes a timely taking-off point for information activities.

Newspapers, magazines, discussion groups, radio forums and educators can contribute to the goal of international cooperation by examining and discussing FAO in terms of what it means to the particular segments of the public they serve.

Organizations such as farmer, business, labor, professional, youth, women's, church and civic groups can play an important role by making a study of FAO as part of their own programs.

American experience in agricultural techniques covering soil conservation, mechanization, use of electric power, rural credit, forestry, nutrition, distribution, farm management, rural education, science and research gives this country a broad basis for understanding the problems--and the solution of the problems--confronting world agriculture today. This understanding can be furthered by a re-examination, at this time, of our own programs in these various fields, with a view to emphasizing how our techniques could be applied or adapted to worldwide food problems.

"The Food and Agriculture Organization is, I believe, one of the greatest hopes of mankind for peace and plenty in the future... FAO is the first tangible, operating agency the nations of the world ever have set up to attack the problem of hunger at its roots. Its primary objective is to help nations of the world to expand both the supply and the effective demand for food so that the earth's two billion men, women, and children may have a better living. It seeks to bring new standards of nutrition to the world, and the means to meet those standards. It hopes to lift the curse which has kept two-thirds of the world's people perpetually underfed." -- Secretary of Agriculture Clinton P. Anderson.

FACTS ABOUT FAO

The Copenhagen meeting beginning September 2 is the second session of the organization. The first session was held in Quebec in October 1945.

Delegations from 42 nations, plus observers from other countries and international agencies, are expected to attend the conference which will meet in the Danish Parliament buildings in Copenhagen. The meeting is expected to last two weeks. The Conference will choose its permanent chairman and other officers and will make up its committees.

Preceding the Conference will be meetings of standing advisory committees of experts, whose findings in their fields will be available for use at the general meeting. The place and opening date of the standing committee sessions follow: Agricultural Production and Research, Copenhagen, August 23; Economics and Statistics, The Hague, August 19; Fisheries, Bergen, August 23; Forestry, Oslo, August 28; and Nutrition, Copenhagen, August 23. In addition, a temporary veterinary committee will meet in London, August 13, and the FAO Executive Committee will meet in Copenhagen, August 28.

WHAT IS FAO?

The Food and Agriculture Organization is an international agency through which member countries (at present 42) work jointly to improve: the farms, fisheries, and forests of the world; the markets where the products of the farms, fisheries, and forests are bought and sold; the trade in these products among nations; and the health and well-being of the people.

FAO grew out of the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture at Hot Springs, Virginia, in May 1943. Representatives from 44 countries there agreed that world-wide action was necessary to raise health standards and improve agricultural production and income. They set up an Interim Commission on Food and Agriculture with headquarters at Washington to draw up plans for a permanent organization. In October 1945 at the historic Quebec Conference, the FAO was born, first of the new permanent United Nations organizations.

The Congress of the United States on July 31, 1945 authorized the President to accept membership for this country in the FAO. The United States Department of Agriculture and other agencies have cooperated closely in supplying information and other services which have helped FAO get under way.

Policy-making body of FAO is the Conference, composed of one representative from each member nation. Each nation has one vote in the Conference, which meets at least once a year. An Executive Committee of nine to fifteen members acts for the Conference between sessions.

Operating on a budget of \$5,000,000 a year for the first five years, FAO's staff is small, consisting mainly of scientists and other experts in nutrition, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, economics, statistics, and education. It has no executive or legislative power. It may investigate problems, seek out the facts, make reports and recommendations about the food needs of the people, but it may not enforce or carry out itself any recommendations.

WHAT FAO DOES

The activities of FAO all involve information -- incoming and outgoing, scientific, technical, and general. Incoming information in the shape of reports from member nations, surveys, and investigations is analyzed, interpreted and translated into outgoing information in one form or another -- books, pamphlets, newspapers, talks, radio broadcasts, etc. FAO, in short, acts as a vast clearing-house for all kinds of information dealing with food and agriculture. In addition, it is an international adviser on food and agriculture.

Governments may request FAO to send special missions to study and advise on specific or general problems. The first such FAO mission went to Greece recently to study that country's agriculture and fisheries from a broad standpoint and to make recommendations for long-term development projects to fit Greek agriculture into the national economy as a whole.

Through National FAO Committees within member nations FAO recommendations and programs are circulated. Actual implementation of the plans, of course, is under control of the individual governments.

FAO works closely with the International Emergency Food Council, created recently at the Special Meeting on Urgent Food Problems held last May in Washington. The IEFC supersedes the Combined Food Board. It has 24 member nations and its function is to recommend allocations of food, feed, seed, machinery and fertilizer to the various needy countries. It is scheduled to operate for as long as the food emergency lasts.

Arrangements have been made for FAO to consult with UNRRA about activities which might be taken over by FAO when UNRRA goes out of existence.

Another temporary organization with which FAO works closely is the Emergency Economic Committee for Europe. An FAO officer supervises the staff of the Food and Agriculture subcommittee of the EECE.

Interlocking of FAO with the temporary agencies dealing with food is designed to effect a smooth transition from the present temporary measures to the long-term measures needed to attain the objectives of FAO.

SOME OF FAO'S PROBLEMS

Surpluses. Surplus is not surplus in terms of human needs (two-thirds of the world's people are chronically hungry) but only in terms of people's ability to pay for the things they want, their purchasing power, or effective demand. FAO proposes to work with governments and international agencies, therefore, to enlarge effective demand as a basis for expanding production. International collaboration to this end, a proper industrial-agricultural balance, and the development of less advanced countries are the three underlying principles fundamental to the expanding economy projected by FAO.

Nutrition. In addition to the people who do not get enough to eat, there are millions, many of them in the more advanced countries, who do not get proper diets. FAO's job is to help the nations find a way to see that every human being gets enough of the right foods to properly fuel, build and repair the body tissues -- mainly carbohydrates, fats and proteins.

Fisheries. By better management of present fishing grounds, and, by opening new ones, FAO may help find ways to increase total production of fisheries. Another problem is how to make better use of the supplies now available.

Forestry. The war has aggravated forest mismanagement and misuse. FAO can stimulate the spread of sound scientific knowledge to be applied to the world's forests so that they may produce cheaply, continuously and in abundance.

Production. The more advanced countries must maintain high production. The less advanced countries must improve their production, and their economy as a whole, in order to provide the necessary buying power so that large and increasing food production can move into consumption with fair returns to agricultural producers. FAO must bring about a free exchange of knowledge that can be applied to those ends. Methods in the less advanced regions must be revolutionized. There is much that might be done by way of large-scale development projects -- irrigation programs in China, India, South America and the Middle East; river valley developments to prevent floods and soil erosion.

Marketing. In the more advanced countries, the problem is to improve and reduce the cost of the marketing systems. In the less advanced countries the problem is to build up marketing facilities -- accurate reporting, transportation and storage systems -- to enable farmers to sell a larger range of products in a wider market at fair and stable prices; and to bring to consumers a greater variety of foods of better quality and nutritive value.

Statistics. Improving and standardizing statistical information on phases of production, marketing, and consumption of food and other agricultural commodities is an important activity of FAO to provide a more complete and accurate picture of the world situation than has been possible hitherto.

FAO MEMBER COUNTRIES are: Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Syria, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

FOR MORE DETAILS ON FAO: The following publications can be obtained from the Distribution Control Office of the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

*** World Food Survey. A press release summary of FAO's food report. ISR 12.

*** World Food Board. A press release summary of FAO's proposal for a long term food policy. ISR 13.

*** FAO: Cornerstone for a House of Life. A 24-page popular leaflet.

*** Facts About FAO. A 7-page fact sheet issued July 23 by FAO.

*** The Amazing Interlude. An address about U. S. and international cooperation, by Secretary of Agriculture at Atlantic City, June 5.

WORLD FOOD SURVEY

One of the basic reports to be presented to the Copenhagen Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization is the WORLD FOOD SURVEY prepared by FAO. The report was designed as a starting point for much of FAO's future scientific and economic work, and to serve as background for discussions at Copenhagen.

Since it was contemplated that emergency agencies would have the job of bringing the world food situation back to something like the prewar position and that FAO would start from there, the Survey gives the prewar food picture and then sets up nutritional targets necessary to provide better diets. The report points out that the targets do not represent the best levels of diet, but rather intermediate goals that appear attainable within the next few years. Survey highlights:

- * Less than a third of the world's population had enough food available for a daily average of more than 2,750 calories per person.
- * About half the world's population was seriously undernourished, with food supplies available for a daily average of less than 2,250 calories.
- * One-sixth of the world's population was eating at a marginal level.

Poverty is given as the chief cause of malnutrition. The Survey shows that all the countries in which the supply of calories was less than 2,250 per person per day had an average per capita income of less than \$100 a year.

In general the high calorie areas included North America, Oceania, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, much of Europe, and three countries of South America. The intermediate areas included most of southern Europe, three countries in Asia, part of the Middle East, and parts of Africa and South America. The low calorie areas included most of Asia, part of the Middle East, all of Central America, and probably parts of South America and Africa not covered by the Survey.

The nutritional target is set at about 2,600 calories per person a day.

Countries with low prewar calorie intake will need greatly increased supplies of cereals, fats, peas and beans, fruits and vegetables, milk, meat, fish and eggs to raise the total calorie level toward the goals set.

Assuming an increase in world population of 25 percent by 1960, world production must be increased by the following percentages if nutritional goals are to be reached: cereals for human consumption 21, roots and tubers 27, sugar 12, fats 34, peas and beans 80, fruits and vegetables 163, meat 46, and milk 100.

Although international trade in food will be increasingly important, the greater part of the additional supplies required by the low-calorie countries to reach consumption goals will in most cases have to be obtained domestically.

Despite the need for greatly expanded food production, when the present emergency is over, a few major commodities including wheat and sugar, will no longer be in short supply in relation to effective demand. Thus a situation may be created in which there are unmarketable surpluses on the one hand, with a disastrous break in prices and heavy pressure for restricted farm output, and on the other, a need to expand production to raise world standards of living and health. It is with the hope of finding a way of avoiding this paradox and of balancing consumption and production at higher standards that the Copenhagen Conference will begin study of a long term world food policy.